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BY: W. DALE NELSON

Former President Richard M. Nixon received secret campaign contributions from the military government of Greece in his 1968 election campaign, according to a new book by a prize-winning reporter.

The book, "The Price of Power," by Seymour M. Hersh, also reports that Henry A. Kissinger may have blocked a Senate investigation of possible Central Intelligence Agency involvement in the political donations.

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Hersh says the Greek campaign contributions were confirmed by Henry J. Tasca, a career Foreign Service officer who had been ambassador to Greece during the Nixon administration, in secret testimony before the House Intelligence Committee in 1976.

Such contributions were legal in 1968.

On Sept. 22, 1970, the Nixon administration lifted an embargo on arms shipments to Greece that had been imposed after a military junta seized power in 1967. The junta, strongly criticized for its human rights record, collapsed in 1974 and parliamentary elections were held.

Hersh says Tasca, who died in 1979, testified that Greek-American businessman Thomas A. Pappas served as a conduit for the campaign contributions. He quotes Elias P. Demetracopoulos, a Greek journalist who moved to Washington after the junta took power, as saying the money amounted to "hundreds of thousands of dollars."

Pappas, who has homes in Boston and Athens, could not be reached for comment.

Demetracopoulos charged in interviews in 1975 that money from the Greek central intelligence agency, known as the KYP, had been funneled into the Nixon campaign.

In an interview Wednesday, Demetracopoulos said he knew the money came from the KYP "through the same sources who tipped me off about the transaction in the first place."

Hersh says Tasca's information "raises the question whether the CIA, which was financing the Greek intelligence operations at the same time, was aware that some of its funds were being returned to the United States for use in its presidential election."

In a 1968 interview with the pro-junta Athens newspaper Apogevmatini, Pappas was quoted as saying, "I have worked for the CIA anytime my help was requested."

"It would be inconceivable for Tom Pappas to have done this transaction and not to have notified his CIA contacts," Demetracopoulos said.

The book quotes unnamed sources "close to" the Senate Intelligence Committee as saying an investigation of the possible CIA role was called off at the request of Kissinger, then secretary of state.

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EXCERPTED